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SUBJECT: UN OVERSIGHT: OIOS EVALUATION CONCLUDES DPA NEEDS  
MORE RESOURCES, BETTER COORDINATION MECHANISMS TO IMPROVE  
ITS CONFLICT PREVENTION ROLE

¶1. This is an action request. Mission seeks guidance on the subject evaluation report in time for the next session of CPC, beginning August 14.

¶2. Summary: In its report on the UN's Department of Political Affairs (DPA), issued as E/AC.51/2006/4, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) concluded that regional divisions needed substantial additional resources as well as management, organizational and procedural changes. In short, the DPA currently has too few resources from which it can draw upon to meet its complex and expanding work obligations.

In order to maintain its objectives - to assist in the prevention, control and resolution of conflict through peaceful means - the OIOS evaluators provide ten recommendations. They call for the review and restructuring of management within various areas ranging from protocols on information collection and gender recognition to strengthening institutional mechanisms for greater system-wide cooperation. The report, which covers Subprogramme 1, Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, of program 1 (Political Affairs) of the medium term plan for the period 2002-2005, is expected to be considered by the Committee for Program and Coordination (CPC) during its session beginning August 14. END SUMMARY.

¶3. Although the findings present a positive trend in conflict and prevention and peacemaking, pointing to a substantial reduction in the number of armed conflicts over the past decade, the OIOS report reaffirms the ongoing and future difficulties posed to the UN by intrastate and transnational conflicts. The report also specifies a host of system-wide problems within the DPA, including: limited success in structural prevention and peacebuilding; lack of clarity and coordination among UN agencies over strategy response to conflict; poor relationships between regional divisions within the DPA and their partners; and asymmetries in information among regional divisions. The lack of fully institutionalized relationships is noted as a catalyst to these deficiencies.

¶4. In addition, the OIOS report describes the Center for International Development and Conflict Management as all too broad of an entity. Currently, the structure is divided into two "mega-divisions" (paragraph 36) that place highly diverse regions under the same management structure. The reports states that the all-inclusive groupings of disparate regions undermine focus on emerging conflict situations and thereby inhibits the mission of the DPA.

¶5. OIOS categorizes other deficiencies in managing and quality issues, including: improper and unstructured methodology; insufficient tools of analysis; and uneven information availability. As a result, the quality of work ranges from "very good to very poor" (paragraph 51).

¶6. Furthermore, gender issues are raised by the report as not being "fully mainstreamed," citing frustration among women professional staff that are not given high profile assignments (paragraph 64).

¶7. OIOS found morale to be low in three of four divisions and "many of the worthwhile recommendations (of recent years) were either neglected or the change process foundered, lacking the required champions at the appropriate management level.

#### OIOS RECOMMENDATIONS (10 Total)

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¶8. The OIOS report presents a number of concrete recommendations, including:

-- DPA and regional divisions should take initiatives in working with relevant UN partners to develop and propose a system-wide strategy to better address intra-state and transnational conflict;

-- DPA, with consultation of the Secretary-General and relevant UN forums and partners, should seek clarification of its role and vision as the focal point for conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding;

-- DPA's regional divisions should strengthen institutional mechanisms for inter-agency relations across the board and should include:

- communication protocols
- well-defined concept of collaboration
- guidelines for collaboration;

-- DPA's regional divisions should seek to implement fully

all the agreed-upon modalities for cooperation with regional organizations;

-- DPA's regional divisions should undergo intensive, time-bound and results-oriented change management process;

-- An independent, external evaluation should be conducted of both the Trust Fund and Preventative Action and the Trust Fund for Special Political Missions and Other Activities, to assess their effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact as well as their management and operations;

-- A protocol for information collection and a framework for conflict analysis should be established to ensure relevance to local and regional concerns;

-- DPA's regional divisions should develop a knowledge of management strategy for developing, organizing, storing, sharing and using their knowledge assets;

-- DPA's regional divisions should establish division-level gender-mainstreaming goals and actions plans;

-- DPA should use e-PAS (individual performance plans) to gauge performance; and,

-- DPA's regional divisions should strengthen their results-based management system.

#### Conclusion:

¶9. "However, their (DPA) evolving mandates imply a set of expectations and requirements that the divisions may not be in a position to meet. Change initiatives attempted in the past failed because they lacked adequate leadership and resources. Unless provisions are made to support the required changes, including efforts to clarify mandates and establish organization-wide working processes with clear division of labor, neither the regional divisions nor the system at large will be in a good position to effectively

meet future challenges" (Paragraph 72).

¶10. Comment. Despite a pointed analysis by OIOS, the overall conclusions of the report fall short in assertiveness as they fail to specify in clear and concise ways the proper initiatives for reducing the inefficiencies and deficiencies within the DPA. The cost to future progress is the result of the short falls of normative recommendations. End Comment.

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